

20mph zones across Midlothian towns could put children at risk objectors claim

Plans to introduce 20mph zones across Midlothian towns could fuel road rage and put children at risk, objectors have claimed.

Midlothian Council's SNP administration cabinet will meet next week to consider extending the reduced speed to all urban streets.

However nine objections will be considered by elected members including claims it will be unenforceable, lead to road rage and be a waste of money.

One protester said the 'utopian' idea would create the impression roads are safe for children to play on and failed to teach them safety.

They said: "Whoever proposed and accepted this "utopian" idea should focus and concentrate on education about road safety usage.

"Roads are not playgrounds. Teach the kids about safety, how to cross the road or use the road while riding the bicycle. It's a nonsense and will deliver opposite result that it's aimed at."

There was anger after 20mph signs were installed across towns in the county while the public consultation into introducing the new rules was being carried out.

One protester said: "It would appear that work has already started to install 20mph signs which means that objections are not going to be considered seriously, if at all."

Among main concerns were questions about how the lower speed would be enforced and the money spent on the changes.

One objector described spending funds on the speed change as "absurd". They added: "While I agree high streets, school zones, housing estates and streets near children's play parks would highly benefit from a lower limit, for most roads it is not only unnecessary but will in turn just fuel road rage amongst drivers leading to conflict and dangerous driving.

"If the limit is reduced to 20mph many drivers will drive between 10 and 20mph meaning locals that are used to the roads being 30mph or 40mph are reduced to a fraction of the speed they have been doing for years, decades even, which in turn leads to dangerous overtakes, aggressive conflicts and the potential for accidents increases exponentially.

"I think it is a great misuse of public funds to roll out such a wide change of speed limits with everything that comes with that to then enforce them and will not only negatively impact the reputation of the council but also cause widespread discourse throughout the county."

Cabinet will be asked to decide whether to go ahead with the introduction of the speed limit after considering the objections at the meeting on Tuesday.

By Marie Sharp Local Democracy Reporter